

**THE CRITICS OF HERBARTIANISM,
AND OTHER MATTER
CONTRIBUTORY TO THE STUDY
OF THE HERBARTIAN QUESTION**

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The critics of Herbartianism, and other matter contributory to the study of the Herbartian question by F. H. Hayward

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"INTEREST IS THE GREATEST WORD IN EDUCATION"

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CRITICS OF HERBARTIANISM

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STUDY OF THE HERBARTIAN QUESTION

BY

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FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS

ASSISTED BY

M. E. THOMAS

BATTERSEA POLYTECHNIC



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PREFACE.

THE following work was begun at Cambridge as a thesis for the London Doctorate of Letters, was continued at the Thuringian centre of Herbartianism, and was completed in a West of England district where, with every passing day, the vital need for an Herbartian propaganda has become to the author more and more pressing and manifest.

Scotsmen,¹ with an educational tradition of some sort at their back, may afford or affect to disparage Herbartianism, but a Southron who knows the paralytic condition of education in his own country and district will, if wise, hesitate to stand aloof from a system which—alone among systems or rudiments of systems—can inspire, move and fascinate. The sun in the heavens is, after all, a more useful luminary than any nebula to be generated a billion years hence by the clash of boreal or other meteorites.

The man who has read Herbart's educational works unmoved has read them either *without* understanding or *with* prejudice. Of Herbart's psychology one may perhaps say with some justification:—

Shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good,
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

¹ Mr. Darroch is dealt with in the Appendix.

But Herbart's educational writings are another matter. The man who has been saved from sin will hesitate to revile the means of his salvation; the man who has found educational light in the pages of Herbart will hesitate to call the light an illusion. Extinguish Herbartianism and you extinguish for a century the hopes of education. Herbart fascinates; his critics do not.

Two Herbartians have recently died, Professor Lazarus and Mr. F. G. Rooper. The writer cannot avoid taking the opportunity of referring to the educational loss involved in the death of the latter. The ranks of official educationists are distinctly poorer now that he is gone from among us.

A remark as to the use of the term "Herbartianism". Purists may protest, but there is real need of a word sufficiently general to embrace the entire school of thought to which Ziller, Dörpfeld and dozens of other German thinkers, and a fair sprinkling of thinkers outside Germany, belong or have belonged. Professor Adams, Dr. Eckoff and other writers have deliberately employed the term "Herbartianism," and the present writer therefore feels but few scruples of conscience in following suit.

Again, the use of "stupid" as a translation of "stumpfsinnig" is not without its drawbacks. The writer is conscious of them; having said so much he has here said enough.

The work is not precisely a unity, it is rather a collection of matter dealing with the historical and polemical aspects of Herbartianism. British educationists will, sooner or later, have to come to a decision upon their attitude towards this question, and it is hoped that the matter of the present volume will be of some assistance to them in the task. They cannot, at any rate, complain that the weaknesses, or supposed weaknesses, of Herbartianism have been con-

cealed. At last we know the worst; and now that the worst is known some of us feel that the best shines brightly. However, be it repeated, the book is a series of contributions rather than a definite unity. But, in view of the fact that British educational thought seems, for the moment, to have a predilection for crystallising itself in books of heterogeneous essays,¹ the imperfections of the present collection may perhaps be pardoned if not applauded.

The peculiar form of the Natorp section is due to the fact that it was printed separately from the rest.

Miss Thomas is responsible for the sections on Vogel and Linde, and desires to express her appreciation of the help given by Miss A. Kirby, B.A., of Plymouth High School. Miss Thomas has also read through the whole work, and made many useful suggestions on matters of detail.

Several of the author's Bristol friends have again helped him by reading proofs; so also has Mr. J. W. Besley, the able Master of Moorland School, Okehampton; Professor Alexander and Miss Catherine Dodd (Owens' College, Manchester) also deserve his thanks; and to Mr. E. H. Carter, M.A. (Board of Education), whose soundness of judgment and knowledge of German educational thought have been of much assistance, the author wishes to tender his warm gratitude.

F. H. H.

OKEHAMPTON, June, 1903.

¹ *Teaching and Organisation* (Longmans); *National Education* (Murray); *The Nation's Need* (Constable), etc., etc., etc.

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PART I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITICS OF HERBARTIANISM.

DURING the last twenty years two phenomena have been noticeable to observers of the educational world—a steady increase in the influence of the Herbartian system, and a series of vigorous attacks upon that system from various quarters of the Fatherland. The former phenomenon has been patent to all, the second to those who have followed the course of events abroad. It is Germany, the land in which Herbartianism is indigenous, which has presented the world with supposed antidotes.

These supposed antidotes, it would be no great exaggeration to say, have received no notice whatever in this country. Never very enthusiastic over educational problems, especially unenthusiastic over such as are not obviously "practical," the British nation as a whole, and many even of its professional educationists, have passed two decades unconscious of the fact that the most complete system of education hitherto given to the world has been going through a period of keen hostile criticism. Even America, where Herbartianism has attained a position of honour and influence, knows little of the battles it has to fight in the home of its birth.

But even on the English horizon there are bright spots. Herbartianism *itself* is being studied, even if its critics are being ignored. This is as it should be. Whatever its alleged weaknesses, Herbartianism, as even its enemies admit,¹ has great

¹ Natorp, *Herbart, Pestalozzi und die heutigen Aufgaben der Erziehungslehre*. Preface.